

PRELUDE

Andante in D

Felix Mendelssohn

INVITATION:

ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 2:4-7, *The Voice*

This is the *detailed* story of the Eternal God's *singular work* in creating all that exists. On the day the heavens and earth were created, ⁵ there were no plants or vegetation to cover the earth. The fields were barren and empty, because the Eternal God had not sent the rains to *nourish* the soil or anyone to tend it. ⁶ In those days, a mist rose up from the ground to *blanket the earth, and its vapors* irrigated the land. ⁷ One day the Eternal God scooped dirt out of the ground, sculpted it into *the shape we call* human, breathed the breath that gives life into the nostrils of the human, and the human became a living soul.

PAUSE – Hold these words of scripture lightly in your hands, heart, head, and whole self.

OPENING HYMN:

O God, as with a Potter's Hand

tune: Ellacombe

**O God, as with a potter's hand, when earth was morning bright,
You shaped from clay a human form that gave your eye delight;
You breathed in love your Spirit's breath; a living creature stirred
And stood within the garden green, awake to hear your word.**

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Genesis 2:4-7, *New International Version*

⁴ This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. ⁵ Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, ⁶ but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. ⁷ Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

OPENING PRAYER:

Crafting, creating, constructing God, Your curiosity is endless and eternal. We will never fully know what prompted You to form and fashion and love humans into being. We will never know Your holy response and reply to the question in Psalm 8, what are humans that You are mindful of us? And we confess that too often our theology is built on original sin rather than original blessing. We have been taught and caught from sermons that the story starts with humans going astray and hiding, rather than reflecting Your image, O God. Too often church has begun with blame and shame, rather than the better news of unconditional and unceasing love. Reorder our thoughts, erase the chalkboards of our hearts, reshape the soil of our souls with Your fingerprints today. We pause to ponder prayerfully the ways we long to continue to become a living soul embodied in this world.

Silent Prayer

RESPONSE:

O God, as with a Potter's Hand

tune: Ellacombe

**But once you shaped from human clay a life whose truth and grace
Revealed an image pure and whole that sin could not deface.
And when we seized your choicest work and broke its fragile clay,
Your hands restored the shattered shards on earth's first Easter day.**

REASSURANCE:

EMBODYING SCRIPTURE

Genesis 2:4-7, *The Common English Bible*

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. On the day the Lord God made earth and sky—⁵ before any wild plants appeared on the earth, and before any field crops grew, because the Lord God hadn't yet sent rain on the earth and there was still no human being to farm the fertile land, ⁶ though a stream rose from the earth and watered all of the fertile land—⁷ the Lord God formed the human from the topsoil of the fertile land and blew life's breath into the being's nostrils. The human came to life.

A MOMENT of SILENCE – what one word or phrase stirs your heart today?

SERMON

*In this here place, we flesh; flesh that weeps, laughs;
flesh that dances on bare feet in grass.* Toni Morrison

RESPONSE

O God, as with a Potter's Hand

tune: Ellacombe

**O God, you hold our earthen lives within your shaping hand
And turn our forming clay to show the image you have planned.
Forgive the sin that mars your work and strives against your will.
Conform our lives to Jesus Christ with wisdom, love, and skill.**

CELEBRATION of COMMUNION

Invitation:

One: May the inventive and inspirational Spirit be with you.

Many: May the constantly creative eternal Sacred be with you.

One: We open our hearts to the One whose image we bear.

Many: We gather in this community with gratitude for the vast variety of ways we display God's handiwork.

One: Come, all who can hear my voice, for you are welcome at this table of grace.

Many: We pull up a chair knowing we are called by name and loved fully from the top of our heads to the soles of our feet.

PASTORAL PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

**Praise to the living God, the God of love and light,
Whose word brought forth the myriad suns and set the worlds in flight;
Whose infinite design, which we but dimly see,
Pervades all nature, making all a cosmic unity.**

**Praise to the living God, from whom all things derive,
Whose Spirit formed upon this sphere the first faint seeds of life;
Whose caused them to evolve, unwitting, toward God's goal,
Till humankind stood on the earth, as living, thinking souls.**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Tuba Tune in D Major

C.S. Lang